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WEEKLY

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AUGUST 26, 1966

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THE LATEST LOAN

Vol. 2: No. 45: August 26, 1966

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LAST week the World Bank announced a fresh loan of \$150 million "for the import of components, materials, spare parts and other goods to help expand output from the existing manufacturing capacity". The loan is intended to cater to the needs of the fifty-nine so-called priority industries. On the Government's own admission, these industries account for barely 8 per cent of the total industrial output taking place in the organised sector. Since organised manufacturing constitutes only about 12 per cent of the aggregate national income, the World Bank loan will have an impact on an area which is less than 1 per cent of the economy as a whole. It is necessary that this sombre fact is kept in mind even as we listen to the inevitable rhapsody emanating from the quarters benefited.

This Bank loan is of course the biggest chunk of "aid" from the West following devaluation. The total volume of aid for the fiscal year 1966-67 is still unlikely to exceed \$900 million, a figure nearly 15 per cent less than even what the Consortium countries had pledged initially for 1965-66, but on which they reneged. Obviously, our Ministers who hustled the country into devaluation have been taken for a ride. There will be no compensatory "aid" to soften the blow of devaluation. The lowering of the external par value of the rupee was asked for by the Western governments because such a measure, they inferred, would make developmental activity a costly venture for Indians and would induce Indians to cut down on projects, so that the necessity for aid from abroad would dwindle correspondingly. This is precisely what has happened; Mr Asoka Mehta has confessed that, physically, we now have a smaller Fourth Plan. Mrs Gandhi's essay on the need for a bolder Plan is therefore only for the birds—and the gullible.

The World Bank and the Consortium members knew the game they were playing. A weak government, terribly unsure of its domestic position, panicks easily. A couple of threats from Mr George Woods, Mr Dean Rusk, and that distinguished American gentleman who is also coincidentally the Indian Ambassador to the USA, Mr B. K. Nehru, and the Union Cabinet succumbed. The half-promises of late May and early June were not however meant to be kept. There will not be, there could not be any spectacular increase in the flow of aid following devaluation. It is going to be the other way round, and for petty straightforward reasons.

The USA remains the pace-setter in the pledging of aid by the Consortium countries. The others cough up the money because the US administration does some meticulous arm-twisting. There is bound to be a pause in this arm-twisting now that the Americans themselves are short of money. Foreign economic aid funds in the 1967 budget have been slashed by more than one-third compared to the previous year's appropriations. The number of beggars, on the other hand, goes on increasing steadily. This year, in addition, India will face competition from Indonesia, which has started behaving and will therefore have to be awarded with a few morsels of aid. General Suharto's gain will be Marshal Mehta's loss.

But the biggest factor is Vietnam, which is gobbling up all the money the US administration can scrape up. The official figure for financing the barbarities in Vietnam has been put at \$12 million this year, but a rather careful analysis made in a recent issue of *Fortune* magazine suggests that \$30 million would be a more appropriate estimate. As the barbarities mount, as more planes and tanks and bombs and gas and men are hurled against the Vietnamese, the American cost might well approach the annual rate of \$50 billion. In such circumstances, there could be no money for even such a loyal supplicant as the Government of India.

A most significant piece of news which came out of Washington almost simultaneously with the announcement of the new Bank loan to India is about the further deterioration in the US balance of payments. Vietnam has been a great leveller and desperately short of funds, the US administration approached the International Monetary Fund for a drawing of \$350 million. They are on the same boat as India; we dare not however ask them to devalue.

Sharing The Air

It is not very difficult to see why, at Saturday's meeting on party political broadcasts before the next election, the Congress representative wanted to refer the "agreed" formula to his executive, while the other six participants accepted the offer with alacrity. Basically, a question of haves and have-nots again. The Congress now enjoys a virtual monopoly of the air; every spoken-word programme now on current affairs, whether it calls itself news or development talk, is 90 per cent official propaganda; and official propaganda means Congress propaganda, for ever since independence "office" has meant the Congress. Since All India Radio never mentions failures but only "successes", broadcasting in India has been almost wholly at the service of the ruling party. This party in a fit of feudal generosity might give the poorer classes a bit of land, "do bigha zamin" (two bighas of land) or, in AIR terms, "das minute samay" (ten minutes' time); but even for so small a favour the Congress appears hesitant. Some apparently take the view that the Opposition's barking should not even briefly disturb the Congress *qawali*.

Even in the Western countries, where there are far more wireless sets and far more public opinion polls, it has never been easy to say how far sound broadcasting or television influences people's voting preferences. The influence of the Press is not much more assessable. In India, where a small proportion of the people listen in to the radio and not many more read the papers, it is of marginal significance whether the Government does not grant some broadcasting time to the political parties. The Election Commissioner's efforts to get the parties agree to some formula are, however, to be commended; listeners should at least once in five years know that All India Radio is not the Voice of India, although once it threatened to become even the Voice of America. It is the total lack of controversy which makes AIR programmes so excruciatingly insipid. AIR needs a breath of fresh air, even if it has to come from speakers with either very dubious or very vicious views.

AIR time will presumably be free. It is field work which is going to be decisive; and this has already become terribly expensive. The constituencies being as large as they are, it costs money for a candidate to get about. There are undoubtedly a few candidates who are so well known and well liked that their campaigns will not cost much more than the prescribed amount. In most constituencies, however, money will tell. And we all know who has the money and where it has come from and where and how it will go back with compound interest. Lyons Range and Dalal Street must already be telling their clients that the best buy today is shares of a company called the Indian National Congress. All India Radio, by comparison, is a public sector enterprise which shows only losses and never declares a dividend; the Congress issues bonus shares.

Shot Abroad

Tokyo may be a particularly good place for love-making, but why the Bombay variety of love must be shown against a Japanese background is not immediately clear. That is what a Hindi film coming to Calcutta promises to do. This is not the first Indian film to be shot, at least in part, in a foreign land. It was perhaps Mr Raj Kapoor who started the current craze; since then

several Bombay film-makers have come, to borrow Mr Naipaul's phrase, "craze for foreign". At least one Bombay unit is now in France (is it yet to leave?), and a popular magazine has already given a preview of what the heroine, who incidentally has an illustrious surname, will be like in the scantiest bikini on the Riviera beach. An excuse for the sure could be one reason why Bombay's film-makers are so keen on shooting abroad, but the scope of the country is longer severely limited. In recent years we have seen more of the female form on the big screen; why, the self-same body will appear in a bikini has almost set a fashion in wearing the at least six inches below the navel, which innovation, we are told, has been honoured with the title of India's navel beauty.

The main explanation for the film-making abroad probably lies in the opportunity it provides to avaricious to spend time and money in countries with greater scope for sure than obtains in post-independence India. After nearly two decades of freedom, there is now in this country a lot of money in a few hands but not a great deal on which it can be readily spent. When the money is black, as it always is with some film stars, spending comes a little more difficult. An assignment abroad is a convenient excuse for burning some of it. Authorities seem remarkably generous in granting foreign exchange to men and women connected with the film industry. Producers get liberal grants for foreign exchange earnings from their films; in addition, the stars maintain large individual allowances, perhaps in recognition of their service to the nation. But all this represents only a fraction of the total foreign exchange spent. Once the minimum exchange quota has been obtained, the hurdle to free spending almost totally removed; exchange can be bought in the black market in virtually unlimited quantities. The official quota, though far from making really serves as the cover for the and spending abroad. The exorbitant prices at which foreign exchange has to be bought in the black market cause little concern to those who have more money than they know what to do with in this bleak, underdeveloped land.

Chuck H. Wilson

The very timid modifications of segregation legislation reluctantly introduced by the Whitehead Government were threatened when the Rhodesian Front came to power in December, 1962: things got worse when Winston Field was replaced by Mr. Smith. The recent assault on Rhodesia's multi-racial university was nothing unexpected. Mr. Smith is not lying at all when he says that the campus was a hive of "subversion": the university's products would mainly have subverted the kind of society Mr. Smith and his men have wanted. The university near Salisbury would have been to many Africans what Oxford and Cambridge are to a greater extent, the London School of Economics were to a large number of Indian students in the twenties and thirties. "You can never go back again". The university was faced with a financial crisis anyway; Mr. Smith has administered the coup de grâce: the magnificent campus may now be preserved exclusively for white students. Higher education for the lower orders is a dangerous idea, especially in a country where the white masters themselves do not suffer from an excess of education.

The lesson Mr. Smith taught the university is only one of the triumphs of the illegal régime in Rhodesia today. More than nine months after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence Mr. Smith remains exactly where he was. His garrulous challenge, Mr. Harold Wilson, has meanwhile not only improved his majority but also changed his Colonial Secretary. Mr. Smith remains unimpressed and continues to demonstrate that the consequences of the economic sanctions are eminently bearable. The passage of time has not made it easier for Britain to use force against the rebel régime, which Mr. Wilson had forewarned in advance anyway, although it becomes increasingly difficult to see what, short of force, can bring Mr. Smith down. The limited staying power of Zambia, the worst victim of UDI and the sanctions, can be seen in President Kaunda's growing impatience with Mr. Wilson's pusillanimity. Weekend reports of resumption of the so-called "talks on talks" suggest that the British Prime Minister, who has many an unappetising

morsel on his plate, is still hoping for fruitful negotiations. The pimp of the settlers, Mr. Duncan Sandys, has of course been openly advocating a deal with Smith.

On September 6 will assemble in London the Commonwealth Prime Ministers. The plight of the pound will receive some attention, perhaps; but Rhodesia is sure to dominate the agenda. And what is Mr. Wilson going to tell his colleagues from 22 countries? In December last Mr. Wilson indicated in Lagos that, in his reckoning, the collapse of the Smith régime would come in a matter of months, if not weeks. Not only is Mr. Smith farther away from his collapse; Mr. Wilson is no nearer at all to the fulfilment of his promise to bring the rebel to book. Britain's only defence, very feeble, appears to be that nobody else has come forward with brighter ideas or readier swords. The unwillingness of Britain is matched by the helplessness of the U.N. and Afro-Asia.

Long Lives McCarthy

The image of Americans' freedom of dissent over Vietnam has always seemed too good to be true. Of the existence of dissent, there is no doubt, however small its size or negligible its influence on policy-makers. What seemed doubtful was that it would be allowed to continue and grow. And it had threatened to grow to embarrassing proportions. Discontent had been mounting in university campuses; even in the corridors of power a man like Fulbright remained a thorn on the President's side. But one Senator does not make a summer, and the 21-year-old Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities was merely biding its time before swooping down upon those who thought that Americans still had the right to protest. Last week it crashed into action with McCarthyite hearings. The committee's acting chairman, Mr. Joe Pool, has also brought forth a new Bill to penalize American citizens alleged to have given aid and comfort to North Vietnam and the Vietcong. But these people must first be tracked down; hence the witch-hunt organized by the Congressional committee, which subpoenaed a number of people to appear before it.

The American Civil Liberties Union had obtained an interim in-

junction from a district judge restraining the committee from beginning the hearings. But Congress would not hear of it. Mr. John McCormack, the Speaker, said: "A court telling a Congressional committee it can't hold a hearing? Why, we might as well not have any Congress at all." Mr. Pool declared his resolve to go ahead with the hearings, "come hell or high water". After an intervention by the Department of Justice, which sought the opinion of the Court of Appeals, the legal difficulty was neatly removed. Three judges, empanelled by the court, overruled the injunction, saying that no "irreparable damage", as they put it, would be done to those asked to appear before the committee. Protests were held even as the committee began its hearings. A young man from Berkeley appeared before the committee in an American soldier's uniform of 1776 in symbolic reminder of the fact that "America was born in dissent". Ah yes, but that seems such a long time ago. A New York student refused to answer questions on the grounds that he was not before a court. Asked whether the Progressive Labour Party, a small group to which he belonged, had urged students to donate blood for North Vietnam, he shouted back: "You are the ones who are sending American soldiers to die."

These individual assertions of dissent will perhaps be in vain; by ignorant acquiescence in State policy the Americans have long forfeited their right to free political opinion. Those who still think otherwise will duly have some sense instilled in them; the Committee on Un-American Activities will see to that. Whether the Johnson administration took special pains to bring the committee back to active life will be particularly interesting to know; it will certainly wish the committee success in its sinister labours.

Paris 'Nuremberg'

Some intellectuals in India think that Bertrand Russell, at 94, is in the stage of senile decay. Did he not fail to accept in toto the Indian version of the border clash with China in 1962? If that was not enough to damn him as a non-intellectual, the fact that he is arranging a trial, in Paris in November, of Johnson, McNamara and Rusk as war crimi-

nals should be conclusive evidence that he is on the lunatic fringe.

Washington, however, is uneasy. If it were Russell alone, he could have been dismissed as a habitual U.S. hater, though at one time, it should be remembered, he urged a preventive nuclear war against Russia when the U.S. had an edge over the former in nuclear armour. Then the progressives thought that he was out of his mind. But Russell has an amazing capacity to outgrow himself, and at 94, he is still restless, angry, and worried about the future of mankind.

The juries at the Paris trial add up to a formidable list: Mr Cardmas, a former Mexican President; Sartre; Josue da Castro, Brazilian economist; Danilo Dolci, Italian social reformer; Peter Weiss, author of *Marat/Sade*; Isaac Deutscher; and others. None of them is a confirmed Communist—another embarrassment for the U.S.

Russell will seek the co-operation of National Liberation Front leaders, who are expected to appear as witnesses at the trial. A committee has been set up in Hanoi to collect data.

It is hoped in certain quarters that the President of France will not permit the President of the USA to be put on trial in Paris. But de Gaulle is unlikely to oblige the Americans.

Men And Machines

A correspondent writes:

To those who are bombed and burnt out, war is a human problem. For instance, to the inhabitants of the Mekong Delta village of Truong Thanh. When the South Vietnamese headman reported the presence of the Vietcong in the area, the Americans, avoiding ground battle, poured in cannon fire, bombs and napalms. Sixteen were killed, six of them children, and 124 lay wounded. And they were not Vietcong. It was, as they say, an accident. To those who are not bothered with the human problem, such accidents cannot be avoided. Their number is going up now that the Vietcong draw away the Americans by feints and then maul the South Vietnamese army.

There is a good deal of expert discussion going on about the efficacy of various weapons used in the war laboratory that Vietnam has become—for the military strategist. It is there that missiles—ground-to-air as well as air-to-air—are being tested in combat for the first time. Of the Russian Sams

it is said that they have proved disappointing. To bring down a little over 17 planes over a longish period, some 300 Sams had to be fired. This is due to several factors: Sams are not the latest Soviet version; most of the missile personnel are North Vietnamese who have not yet acquired enough experience; US tactics have also done much to reduce the missile threat—whenever the missile launching can be seen visually a quick diving turn is usually enough to throw the missile off. The Russians, however, having learnt from combat experience, have improved their Sams. But Vietcong anti-air-

A pamphlet entitled *Vietnam, Yesterday and Today* and distributed in India by the United States Information Service mentions 34 countries which had, by mid-1965, provided or agreed to provide aid to South Vietnam. Among the countries listed is India. We think it important to know if this is correct. If so, the Government of India should immediately inform the people of this country of the nature of this aid, of the exact circumstances in which and the time at which the aid pledge was given, and of all the conditions and implications of the pledge. More important, the people must know if the aid has already been provided. If, on the other hand, the statement made in the pamphlet is incorrect, it would be interesting to know what New Delhi proposes to do about it.

craft guns, ranging in calibre from 7.62 mm. rifles to 85 mm. radar-controlled guns, have so far been most effective. As US planes make, in order to avoid the Sams, low-level approaches, they expose themselves to ground fire. It is so effective now that, in place of the official Air Force description of anti-aircraft fire as either light, moderate or intense, the US fliers have coined their own terms—intense, unbearable and let's-get-the-hell-out-of-here.

Whether the Russians will help North Vietnamese with their latest ground-to-air missiles is not known. There are still conflicting reports about the extent and quality of Russian assistance. According to a Hong

Kong report, the Kremlin is to send more missiles, and many of which North Vietnamese pilots are being trained in Russia. Some supplies now go by submarine, merchant ship and are stored in tunnels.

China, however, is sceptical of Russian aid and is said to have sent a sharp Note to Moscow pointing against the whispering campaign of Russian aid for Hanoi passing through China is being handicapped. Questions how Russia could ever set up missiles in Cuba where it needs only Chinese territory to store war equipment for Hanoi. Can't Russia, the third largest merchant ship owner in the world, ship to North Vietnam? He complains that some time ago Russians had asked the Chinese to keep immediately ready 1,700 ships to tranship war materials to Hanoi but only 500 were utilised, the remaining idle despite repeated reminders. Another charge is that during November-December 1964 Russia sent only 42,000 tons of equipment to North Vietnam as during the same period she sent 200,000 tons of defence and equipment for India, Pakistan and Middle East countries.

It is perhaps an indirect trial of the innate strength of the Vietnamese that the Russians and Chinese continue to quarrel. Perhaps both King and Moscow know that the Vietcong, with limited help abroad, will be able to lick the Americans. Hanoi is preparing for a long war. North Vietnamese military plants are being dispersed to cities, in a movement reminiscent of what the Russians did during German invasion.

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Poll Prospects In Rajasthan

AMSHUMAN

THE once devalued Maharajas, Maharanis, Rajkumars, Rajkumaris and Chieftains are a very highly priced lot in Rajasthan now. Indeed, their value keeps soaring as the general elections draw near.

All the former rulers and chieftains of this north-western State of India are in the seller's market at the moment; the reason is not far to seek: the Congress Party, though its leaders would not publicly admit so, is a little scared of the Swatantra-Jan Sangh-Samyukta Socialist alliance that seems to have emerged as a strong contender for power.

And the Congress feels that one of the best methods of confronting the alliance is to stock in its armoury enough ex-rulers, their wives, mothers and sisters and employ them skillfully along with the yoked bullocks. It does not matter if this strategy means paying a huge price, politically speaking. The ruling party's immediate plans seem to be to retain power by any means; what follows might be taken care of later.

So Mr Bhupesh Gupta could safely, though sadly, write off Rajasthan in his campaign to recruit capitalists to promote socialism (or communism?). For, the Congress can pay the Maharajas-turned-industrialists or politicians a much bigger price than Mr Bhupesh Gupta's party or, for that matter, any other party can. Besides, so far as the Maharajas are concerned, there is always the chance of Congress coming back to power.

However, unfortunately for the Congress, things do not appear to be that easy this time. Experience seems to have shown the direct descendants of the sun or moon inhabiting Rajasthan—they are not few in number, students of early post-independence history will remember—that being in the Opposition also pays, especially when the Opposition seems to be moving fast towards the Treasury Benches.

Moreover, habits die hard and Congress leaders still keep on muttering socialism. This is rather nauseating to those who ruled as they liked until less than two decades ago.

To them Rajaji's writings and the Swatantra Party's philosophy have a greater appeal. And above all, the Jaipur Royal House leads the Swatantra Party.

So that, leave aside buying more princes and princesses, the Congress is finding it difficult even to retain the ones already in its bag. Why, the Maharaja of Jhalawar, a member of the Mohanlal Sukhadia Cabinet, has turned a rebel in the Congress Party and what he is up to, along with the commoner Congress dissidents, is a highly guarded secret.

The Maharaja of Bharatpur has deserted the Congress, causing not a little worry to Mr Raj Bahadur, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, who represents Bharatpur in the Lok Sabha.

The Rajmata (queen mother) of Jaisalmer, that district bordering Pakistan, has left the Congress and joined the Swatantra Party after accusing the Congress Administration of indulging in a variety of corrupt practices.

The Maharaja of Jaipur, presently representing this country in Spain, has decided to bid goodbye to diplomacy in November (when his term expires) and rejoin politics, according to Swatantra Party spokesmen in Jaipur. It is also almost certain that Maharani Gayatri Devi, star-attraction in the Swatantra Party, will stand for a seat in the Vidhan Sabha, if only to tell voters that the Swatantra Party means business this time.

Big Vote-Getter

The glamorous Maharani is a great vote-getter. Besides scoring the highest number of votes in the last elections for the Lok Sabha she was responsible for the debacle of the Congress not only in the former Jaipur State but, to an extent, elsewhere in Rajasthan.

In the last elections, for the 176-member Vidhan Sabha the Congress could get only 88 seats, that is, not even a slender majority. But taking advantage of the division in the Opposition it managed to form a government after "converting" a few Swatantrites and other Opposition members and "re-converting" rebel Congressmen.

In the next elections, the Vidhan Sabha will have 184 seats and unless the Congress wins a clear majority it is doubtful whether it would be able

to draw anyone from the Opposition into its ranks and form a government.

For one thing, the alliance consists of what may be described as "loyal" members, those who sat on the fence having already crossed the floor. Secondly, there will not be many independents in the field in February 1967 and consequently very few in the next Vidhan Sabha. Since independents have no particular ideology, what prevents them joining the alliance to help it form a government if it secures a majority or near-majority?

The parties forming the alliance against the Congress in Rajasthan have together 61 seats now, 27 of their members having crossed over to the Congress benches between the last elections and now. And mind you, in 1962 they did not fight against the Congress but practically speaking, amongst themselves. In other words, they divided the anti-Congress votes to the advantage of the ruling party.

All this and a hundred other facts indicate one thing and that is that in Rajasthan there might be a further swing to the Right after the next elections and that the Congress might well occupy the much warmed up Opposition Benches.

Why? Rising expectations and increasing frustration among the people, to quote Mr Asoka Mehta. Another Union Minister, Mr Raj Bahadur, also had some answers to this question and he uttered them more recently at a political conference of Congress workers at the picturesque Amber Palace near Jaipur.

Said the worried Mr Raj Bahadur: Development work, particularly in the rural areas has been very slow; people are disgusted. It is shameful that Ministers of the State should be amusing themselves in village politics (meaning panchayats) to the detriment of the State's progress.

And God knows what prompted Mr Raj Bahadur to add angrily that it was wrong on the part of Ministers to employ administrative officers to get votes. Which is true, anyway.

But what has the Opposition alliance to give to the people that the Congress has not? The alliance is now engaged in finalising a "common programme" but has already made it known that if returned to power "we will give food and employment to everyone in Rajasthan."

Could there be a better slogan?

A "Dkhar" Government

M. GUPTA

"I used to think that only the missionaries invade these God-forsaken areas. I am surprised to see you here. You are brave." The words came to me laden with a heavy Latin accent through a heavier beard. Don't the missionary and the anthropologist invade the same area, though for different purposes? I asked.

We got along famously in no time and found ourselves discussing something which related more to the history and culture of the fascinating land the missionary came from rather than our professions. Of course anthropologists are never accused of academic prejudices and thank God, they can make long detours via the Greeks, the Moors, the Byzantine and even the delinquency problem before landing in a small village in an extreme corner of Khasi and Jaintia Hills. I asked Father how two particular churches were more successful than others in converting the tribal people of Assam. His brief statement surprised me. "It's due to the personal appeal of the missionaries", he said. The people are overwhelmed by the sacrifice and devotion of the clergymen who come from thousands of miles away to dedicate their service and life in jungles. Besides, there may be psychological reasons such as an attempt to grope with a definite idea of God who has a conceivable human form different from their animistic idea of supernatural power.

I was thinking how to direct the conversation to the delicate topic of the mixed dose of religion and politics the missionaries are presumed to prescribe for people who lack immunity to both. It was embarrassing to do so—the Scott episode was still on the front pages of the dailies. However, before I could broach the subject the missionary blurted out that he knew what I had in mind, but "you see I understand little of politics and I prefer to remain in the confines of my church. But I would introduce you to a very interesting 'political man' of this area who may enlighten you."

It was this 'political man' who made me realise how distant and alienated they feel from Delhi or,

for that matter, from Shillong itself. The approach to Shillong from this place is either on foot along bridle-paths skirting the hills averaging 8000 feet or on a P.W.D. mud road where even a jeep wiggles like a paper boat. I knew the latter means of communication, so I agreed with him that the hundred odd miles to Shillong was farther than the 2,000 and odd miles to New Delhi. As I continued to talk of my aching bones he stopped me and asked why couldn't I go and tell my government (since I was a non-khasi, a non-tribal, I naturally became sort of a government agent in his reckoning) that even this utter lack of communication might not stop the infiltration of revolutionary ideas into the furthest corner of the hill districts? They could (meaning 'them' up at Shillong and Delhi) hope for an epilogue to the Mizo drama.

He was only voicing a feeling that had been growing for more than a decade now. I had already met, within a week, at least a dozen young men, leaders of rural settlements who shared the same anger, but perhaps less articulate. These are the youths in trousers and leather jackets, educated in schools at Shillong or the vicinity, who went back to their villages to become school teachers, 'sardars' and pastors. They visit Shillong once a month or so, read newspapers regularly, and occasionally send a letter or two to the local papers.

The 'political man', a straightforward tribal, continued to rail against the Government and the privileged plains-people who misused the isolationist policy towards the brave hill-people by keeping them in ignorance, and by exploitation and poverty. At this point the missionary shifted on his seat, quite impressed by the biblical fervour of the last part of the speech, except for the reference to exploitation perhaps.

I decided to keep politics aside and be friends with him in so far as friendship is possible between a *dkhar* (a foreigner) and a native leader in such a short time. We talked about land tenure, inheritance of property, marriage, women and their infidelity, divorce, the excessive drunkenness

among the Khasi males and so on. My 'political' friend was quite interested in topics relating to women (despite the presence of his reverend father) and he had a lot to say about adultery, the primary cause of the increasing number of divorces, is being committed by "women only". "Whom do the women commit it?" I asked. Both the men looked puzzled and after a few seconds my tribal friend managed a big laugh.

The Border

Realizing that the human approach would not take me far, I decided to close the chapter of cultural anthropology and got back to politics again, starting with a glib attack on my government to convince my listeners that I was no closer to the establishment. This worked better and my aggressive friend began to talk a lot more than he had intended. I gathered how some of the newly imposed safeguards and decisions of the State Government interfered with his vested interests along the border separating East Pakistan and his land. The cut-down of his revenue from the weekly and bi-weekly markets on the border was a big blow after partition, although the infiltration of ideas and smuggled goods could not be interfered with. (I noticed for the first time that he was using a West German lighter). The newly set-up government offices, such as Block Development, encroached on part of his monopoly of power and authority vis-a-vis the villagers. Now he has to appease these officers who are, besides being *dkhar* (mostly from the plains with a few exceptions), inexperienced. He has to move back and forth between the District Council at Shillong and the Khasi Durbar (the indigenous democratic body of administration) headed by his mother's brother, in order to cope with all the new rules and regulations. But, of course, with the authentic blue blood (with the exception of a negligible number of Anglo-Khasi unions during the flourishing era of English rule) running through all his ascending generations, he still holds the trump card to sway public opinion so as to be elected a member of the District Council from his area. What he is aspiring to is to come close to an image of a miniature Phizo in his own fashion. The aspiration is not as ridiculous as the attempt seems. He is at a vantage point, he can suc-



QUENCHING OUR THIRST WITHOUT AID

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cessfully exploit a number of situations which have arisen from many mistakes made at Shillong over a long period since 1947.

The forbidden area (between his country and Pakistan) which used to be the meeting and trading ground of the peoples from either side of the border, according to my friend, is the weakest spot of Indian administration. He hinted at his connections with individuals in Pakistan who matter. The innocent trade of goods of both foreign and Pakistani make in which he and others are involved goes on with the full knowledge of excise 'regulations' of the State Government. He did not have to add that these 'regulations' are quite flexible to suit his purpose, thanks to the lenient excise officers.

Commentary

A Blind Alley

OUTSIDER

I always wonder why the reports of parliamentary proceedings in the newspapers do not make all their readers feel the utter futility of them. It should seem obvious that there could be nothing more irrelevant to what was really happening in the political and economic fields, or for that matter even in the back-shop of party politics, than the endless talking in Parliament. Perhaps after getting used to enjoying the verbal fireworks of the Indian nationalist leaders in the legislatures of the British days for their own sake we have not outgrown the habit, and we still read the reports of the parliamentary debates as we read those about football. Certainly, parliamentary reporting and sports reporting have drawn very close together in style in our time. Or is it that we are subconsciously aware of a bigger fact: that parliamentary politics is no longer related to the government of the country, and so might be looked upon as a form of mass entertainment like the cinema or the theatre or the games.

Let me try to make what I have said a little more concrete by referring to some recent parliamentary proceedings. Naturally, the recent no-confidence motion would come to the mind of everybody. What did it add

At this point my 'political' friend stopped, a bit exhausted from his complaints and confessions and looked away at the distant beauty of sunset. The pink glow of the setting sun was casting shadows on the hill slopes carpeted with wild ginger blossoms of a darker shade of pink. The Khasis are great lovers of nature. "Aren't you happy to be in this beautiful country of mine?" I smiled. The sunset was a distraction from thoughts that had been bothering me, thoughts of the articulate anger and attacks directed toward a target far away from the tribals, the straw effigy of a national government they are ready to burn. It is nothing more or less than a *dhkar* government, a foreign rule; thanks to our policies a la Scotland or Elwin.

up to? After it was over, it was announced in big headlines that it was rejected—an instance of the abuse of large type by newspapers in these days, for it could not have been otherwise. All censure motions against a party in power are formally lost. The effect of censure debates is seen only at the time of the next general elections, and in India at no time at all.

Then, again, the newspapers are always hesitant to say to whom the honours of a debate have gone. Knowing the mood of the public and in any case caring more for it than the Government, the papers cannot ignore the Opposition in spite of its small numbers, and they do pay a tribute to the fireworks of the Opposition. For instance, in regard to the no-confidence motion one parliamentary correspondent wrote:

"Mr Hiren Mukerjee trained all his formidable oratorical guns on the Prime Minister.... He blasted away for an hour and his searing, sustained attack made a considerable dent in the Treasury bench's defences.... The honours of the day were plainly Mr Mukerjee's. He set a pace that none after him could match."

This was as handsome a tribute to a spokesman of the Opposition as

could perhaps be imagined. Ironically, I might develop the point I just made about the growing dilution of parliamentary reporting, sports reporting by quoting a line from a sports report in the issue of the same newspaper:

"Championship hunters of the Estate had a torrid fight before attaining feather-bed comfort.... Estate began in a fine style, looking masters all the while.... The twist came in the second minute."

—the difference between two exiles of reporting is that while the one is lurid, the other is only sub-lurid.

But Mr Mukerjee was not to let his glory undimmed. The same correspondent reported about Mrs Gandhi's rejoinder:

"Mrs Gandhi had her moment of parliamentary triumph when the Lok Sabha threw out Hiren Mukerjee's motion.... She wore the diffidence and halting livery that marred her last speech to the House. Instead, Mrs Gandhi willingly, almost eagerly, joined the Opposition's game on its terms: she attacked when she needed to—and some of her thrusts went sharply home."

No wonder the paper of this correspondent had an editorial on the debate which was given the title "Useless Draw". Certainly, the motion showed itself to be much more impotent than the London Times which calls itself so.

There is no doubt it was a good draw. But I would put it differently. It was not quite as good a play. It was like being given a version of *The Taming of the Shrew* which it was difficult to decide whether Petruchio or Katharina got the best of it. The back talk went as far as this:

Petruchio.—Come on, I'll give you a name; once more toward our father's Good Lord, bright and good shines the moon.

Katharina.—The moon! the moon! it is not moon now.

Petruchio.—I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

Katharina.—I know it is the moon that shines so bright.

and the report did not give the sequel—

Petruchio.—Now, by my mother's

son, and that's myself,
It shall be moon, or
star, or what I list,
Or ere I journey to
your father's house.
Go one and fetch our
horses back again.

Evermore cross'd and
cross'd: nothing but
cross'd.

Katharina.—Forward I pray, since
we have come so far,
And let be it moon,
or sun, or what you
please.

An if you please to
call it rush-candle,
Henceforth I vow it
shall be so for me.

The same futility is being seen in
other matters. Even the members
of the Congress Party are getting res-
tless. The Public Accounts Com-
mittee seems to be at open war with
the Ministers. Yet the Government
is driven only to trim and tack the
sails, and nothing ever happens.
The object of the Government ap-
pears to be to remain in the wind—
which in parliamentary government
means remaining in office.

If this is the state of affairs in
parliamentary politics in India it
must also be pointed out that things
are not much better in the Mother
of Parliaments, of which our Parliam-
ent is only an ineffective imitation.

I once saw a sitting of the House
of Commons, with Winston Chur-
chill and Anthony Eden seated on
the front Treasury Bench. I set down
the impression it made on me in the
following words:

"I could not bring myself to be-
lieve that what I was seeing and
hearing was in any way connected
with government, or with the cruel
trade of politics, in which good-
nature had no place. On the con-
trary, the mental state created
within me by the proceedings was
a more or less close anticipation of
what I felt at Sadler's Wells the
same night.

"Everybody in that chamber
seemed to be conforming to some
pre-established patterns of behav-
iour, a fixed code which laid down
that the debates should have an
air of high-spirited and even angry
contests and yet mean nothing at
all in the upshot. The questions
and answers seemed to me to be
more like the pulling of crackers
by two friends than the sharp

rapier thrusts they were meant to
resemble. I asked myself: 'What
is the meaning of this highly sty-
lized behaviour?' As the question
rose in my mind, the answer also
suggested itself.

"What I was seeing was a tradi-
tional and even venerable ritual,
which had to be gone through cor-
rectly, decorously, and even in a
devout manner, in order to main-
tain the tradition of parliamentary
government."

Competent English critics have not
disputed this impression of mine.

I have just received a letter from
my son, who lives in England, in
which he sums up the state of parlia-
mentary politics there in the follow-
ing words:

"Anyhow, the English people are
going through one of their periodic
soul searchings, which rather re-
minds one of the French difficul-

ties before de Gaulle came into
power. Somehow or other demo-
cratic politics has reached a blind
alley of hypocrisy and ineffectue-
ness which is proving as catastro-
phic for the country as it did in the
early nineteen-thirties. Yet, this is
the only form of politics that is or
would be acceptable to the people
of this country."

If this is true of Britain, what
should we think of our parliamen-
tary system? Everywhere in the
world true government today is be-
ing carried on by a bureaucracy, and
parliamentary politics is resulting
only in an extension of Parkinson's
Law to politics for the benefit of the
professional politician. On account
of our incapacity for political think-
ing we have to be saddled with an
out-of-date system, which is worse
than out-of-date here—being a sham.

Calcutta Diary

A.M.

SOME weeks ago I happened to
be present at a meeting con-
vened by the Prime Minister to dis-
cuss ways and means of raising the
efficiency of public sector enterprises.
There was quite a bit of discussion
on the state of industrial relations in
the public sector. Somebody inevit-
ably brought up the question of poli-
tical pressure from above. Managers
of government-owned plants, it was
stated, are under specific instructions
to patronise and foster the growth of
unions which are affiliated with the
Indian National Trade Union Con-
gress. Even if initially the INTUC
unions do not have much following,
as a consequence of such sustained
patronage, sooner or later workers
would flock to such unions for the
redress of their grievances. Given
the principle that there will be only
one recognised union for each plant,
this was one way of ensuring that
INTUC does really gain in strength.
Public sector managers, it was hinted,
are even encouraged to abet in the
fudging of the membership rolls if
that would help the recognition of
the INTUC unions.

This state of affairs, several partici-
pants at the meeting plaintively told
the Prime Minister, does tremendous

harm. Since a good deal of nepo-
tism is involved in the recognition of
an INTUC union, a psychological
barrier is straightaway set up between
the management and the workers.
Also, the INTUC union soon finds
that the non-recognised unions make
the most of their non-recognition by
raising inordinately high demands
which they do not have to push
through at the bargaining table. To
maintain its tenuous hold among the
workers, the INTUC union thus
finds itself compelled to formulate
still stiffer demands. Finally, the
INTUC bosses pose a big problem.
They get into the habit of dictating
terms to the public sector managers;
in case the latter try to give them the
brush-off, there is always the threat
of being reported higher up in New
Delhi.

The private sector, it was pointed
out at the Prime Minister's meeting,
are not afflicted by this political con-
straint. The managers there are at
liberty to recognise the union which
has a genuine majority among the
workers, whatever its political com-
plexion, and life becomes easier all
around. The union knows that, as
the recognised organisation represent-
ing the employees, it has not only to

formulate demands, but to have them conceded by the authorities. It therefore makes a proper assessment of the 'feasible space', and decides to move within this bounded area. The Tatas learned to their cost in 1957 that, where the sentiments of the mass of the workers are clearly against the INTUC union, to try to shore it up would be an infructuous exercise, and would entail enormous loss of output and income.

It was implicitly agreed at the Prime Minister's meeting that it would be most desirable to free the public sector plants from the tyranny of the INTUC unions. But between the desire and the deed falls the hefty shadow of bosses like Mr Atulya Ghosh; and we can be sure Mrs Gandhi's sovereign powers do not extend over Mr Ghosh. The happenings in Durgapur have culminated in an interruption of activities which should easily represent three weeks' loss of output, or roughly 60,000 tons. In terms of realisable prices, this will amount to something like Rs 3 crores, part of which will be in foreign exchange. This entire loss can be attributed to Mr Atulya Ghosh, the same gentleman whose habit it is to harangue Maidan crowds on the holy duty of raising national output. Mr Ghosh happens to be the boss of the Durgapur Steel Workers' Union, the INTUC affiliated organisation recognised by the management of Hindusthan Steel. Whatever might have been this union's following among the workers five years ago, there can be no question that, as of today, the rival, officially non-recognised Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union has much the larger influence. In the most recent elections to the steel plant's Works Committee, I am told, nine out of the ten seats were captured by the nominees of the Employees' Union, and Mr Ghosh's union just managed to elect a single representative. This was the signal for trouble. The General Manager, by all accounts, is a terribly God-fearing man, God, in this instance, being Mr Atulya Ghosh himself, for rumour has it that the General Manager was named to the post because Mr Ghosh had nominated him in the first place. The newly-elected Works Committee was never allowed to meet, so there was no opportunity on the part of the employees to bring up for discussion with the authorities

the day-to-day problems at the shop level. Communication between the vast body of employees and the management broke down almost totally. The General Manager used his judgment to call in only the leaders of Mr Ghosh's union. After all, it was the recognised union, and the fiction of legality had to be preserved. No such legal conscience apparently bothered him when he decided to ignore the Works Committee. The inevitable followed. Complaints, grievances and queries piled up; the recognised union did not inspire confidence; the Works Committee was not allowed to function; the employees decided to march on August 7 on deputation to the General Manager; but the latter would 'entertain' the complaints if only they are 'routed through the proper channel', namely, through Mr Ghosh and Mr Ananda Gopal Mukherji; the crowd grew in size outside the General Manager's Office; the official lost his nerve and asked for the police. And the nation lost Rs 3 crores worth of output.

One is tempted to depict the General Manager as the villain of the piece, but, despite all that has happened, I cannot but feel a lurking sympathy for him. He and his tribe find themselves placed in a difficult corner. They are by and large career-minded, a political people. They started their life as engineers or technologists, and suddenly find themselves elevated as senior managers. They appreciate the power and affluence which the new posts have brought to them, and take these as well-earned rewards for their hard work and technical competence spanning a long career. But they also know that, having reached near the top of the ladder in the public sector plants, their survival there—and further advance—depends upon the whims and dispensations of political bosses. Technical brilliance and quality of leadership by themselves cannot take them any further. From now on, the Creator and Destroyer assumes the incarnation of an Atulya Ghosh or a Sanjeeva Reddy. The general managers or other senior personnel of the public enterprises, ordinary mortals all, soon succumb. They want to protect their career, and they genuinely come to believe that, come hell or high water, as long as somebody up there likes them, they are ensconced in safety. Good management then becomes synonymous with

doing all those things—straight or not-so-straight—which will please the political boss.

The Emergency has been a contributory factor to this enervation. Thanks to the operation of the Emergency and the generally tense atmosphere in the country, the Congress political bosses could flaunt their omnipotence. They become the sole repository of Patriotism, National Duty, and all that; newspapers would print the picture of bosses closeted with the Prime Minister, on the front page; the air would be thick with intimations of their immortality. A legend would quickly grow: if the Prime Minister herself—and the Chief Minister—quail before the boss, how dare a puny General Manager of a steel plant behave otherwise? Over the last few months a certain deflation of these bosses has taken place, but the illusion of grandeur dies hard. I read in *The Statesman* of August 19 that Mr Atulya Ghosh in another context has assured his colleagues in the Lok Sabha: 'As far as I am concerned, I will abide by the law of the land'. How generous on his part.

There is another side to the Durgapur story. The strike declared by the Hindusthan Steel Employees' Union had a whimpering end. It is puzzling to outsiders why a movement, which could evoke the passionate backing of not only the overwhelming majority of the employees of the steel plant but of the entire West Bengal population, was called off so suddenly, and, let there be no mincing of words here, on such a flimsy pretext. The township was, of course being denied food rations, and since the strike had been declared illegal, there was always the possibility of wholesale arrests and prosecutions. But none of these explains the anti-climactic withdrawal of the agitation. The Employees' Union, it is reported, chose further inaction because it was paralysed from within and, rather than expose the schism within the union, sympathisers of the Right and the Left decided to allow things to quieten down, and meanwhile continue their inter-party dialogue. If true, this is a clear example of the organisation lagging behind the will of the workers. It is a pity, and one could make almost a similar generalisation regarding the

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nature of the Opposition in West Bengal as a whole.

Mrs Gandhi and Mr Chagla are not yet sure about the temper of the public; plans for the Indo-American Foundation have therefore for the present been put in cold storage. They are obviously waiting for a more convenient moment before resuscitating the proposal. Coming events however cast their shadows before. A cameraman from the United States Information Service is at the moment going round a particular educational institution in Calcutta and trying to take photographs of individual faculty members. If photographing comes, can fingerprinting be far behind? Nobody knows who gave the USIS the authorisation to take these photographs, and a reference to the authorities of the institution concerned has met with a dusty answer. It is the same story all over: timidity at high places. Most principals and directors and members of the governing body of academic institutions have by now developed a cringing attitude so far as the USIS is concerned. The USIS, the dispenser of bounties, must be kept happy at all costs. And if they want to take pictures of faculty members—even if these pictures end up in CIA dossiers—we have to play along; after all, we must not annoy them, they have promised to donate us a projector—or one hundred books—or a copy of the film *Years of Lightning, Day of Drums*—or they have promised a visiting fellowship to the principal and maybe another faculty member. Even without the Indo-American Foundation, the USIS is moving in and taking over large chunks of our educational programme. One can well imagine, despite the moron-like stance of Mr Chagla in Parliament, how bad things will turn once the Foundation is formally inaugurated.

The following story could be apocryphal, but perhaps it is not. Now that the elections are approaching, all parties are trying hard to raise funds. A particular Leftist party in Calcutta has hit upon an altogether novel way of replenishing its funds. Each time the ruling party organises a meeting at the Maidan, this Opposition party allows its members and sympathisers to join the truckloads of Congress 'volunteers' who are brought

in from the suburbs to shout appropriate slogans and cheer Atulya Babu along. Apart from the free truck ride, each such 'volunteer', according to the story, is paid Rs 3 cash down for his or her labours. The Left party sympathisers discovered that, once you are on the Maidan, you don't have to stay till the bitter end,

but can melt away earlier, so that, as told, the performance of the day does not detain anyone for more than three hours. This works out at one rupee for each hour of labour, and if there are three hundred and such volunteers, they can add a thousand rupees to their party fund in the course of one evening.

Delhi Letter

Encircled—Or Isolated?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PERHAPS the overpowering loneliness of New Delhi adds to one's cynicism. But not quite enough of it to be able to pity the Government, like Acharya Kripalani does. The Government, yet to recover from the hallucinations of the "ghera dalo" days, is ready to settle for self-pity in the absence of pity from the Opposition, or even the Congress party. As for Mrs Indira Gandhi, she is the most alienated Prime Minister the country has had.

Over the week, the Government reeled under the staggering counter-punch from the Opposition. Besides, the Opposition has slung enough mud at the Government and the ruling party, much of which would stick. Isolated, the Government is both defenceless and indefensible in the normal parliamentary sense. So it relies on the ready methods of a police State to ensure its survival. A qualitative change is coming over our parliamentary politics. Dr Lohia was right in a way. The disorder and confusion in Parliament reflected the situation outside.

The Government's performance in Parliament on two issues provided a fair indication of the crisis of faith that is overcoming it. The arrest of Mr Sunil Das, an AICC employee, not only put the Government to a great deal of embarrassment but reduced it to a joke. But Mr Hathi's performance during the debate made it worse for the Congress party.

By some strange quirk of fate, lightning struck the coaxial cable at Asansol (part of Mr Atulya Ghosh's constituency) on the day the issue was raised in the Lok Sabha. The Calcutta papers could not get the story on their own teleprinters and

had to make do with the colourless agency versions of the debate. For instance, did anyone read that Mr Surendranath Dwivedi said if the DIR had any meaning, Mr Atulya Ghosh should have been detained first? There was tension and excitement and the Congress members, shocked at the allegations, took quite some time to recover and join issue, or even to point out that it was improper to make such allegations when Mr Ghosh was not present in the House. When someone challenged Mr Madhu Limaye and asked him if he had proof, Mr Limaye snapped back: 'refer it to the Privileges Committee!'

Mr Nanda was absent from the House and poor Mr Hathi was holding the baby. Mr Hathi tried to explain the two-month delay between Mr Mohit Chowdhury's confession and the actual arrests in Calcutta and New Delhi and the Opposition was angry at his facile explanation. Senior Congress members like Mr H. C. Mathur joined issue with the Minister.

Later that evening, at the meeting of the party executive, Mr Bhagat Jha Azad, Mr Tiwari, Mr Mathur and Mr Jaswant Mehta grilled the Government over this. Mr Nanda looked helpless, and grinned like a sadhu. Even the Prime Minister was not convinced by the explanation for the delay and asked Mr Nanda to make a statement in Parliament explaining the delay. The next day Mr Nanda did make a statement, in the Rajya Sabha though. Surprisingly, the Government's stand had shifted. While Mr Hathi did not challenge the Opposition statement that Mr Sunil Das and others were

NOW

espionage charge, Mr Nanda shifted his ground. He said the arrests were on charges of subversive activities.

At the party executive meeting, Mr Nanda wailed that he was being charged by two sides on grounds that were contradictory. One section said he had delayed the arrests at Mr Anilya Ghosh's instance. Another said he had carried out the arrests to embarrass Mr Ghosh.

On Top Again

But one could not help linking up the attitude of some Congress MPs to the reported move to secure Mr Nanda's ouster as soon as possible. The next day, in the Rajya Sabha, Mr Nanda seemed to have regained his lost confidence. He appeared to be well on top once again.

Later in the week, the Subramaniam affair warmed up. The leakage of the Attorney-General story appears to have been an organised one. Three papers got it and the versions were almost identical. The Opposition tried to ambush the Government for this but the Government survived. It transpired later that the Prime

Minister did consult the Attorney-General but it was a private consultation. The Speaker, Mr Hukam Singh, repeatedly said in the House that such private advice should remain private. It implied something important. If the Prime Minister were to take a political decision on the Subramaniam affair, she cannot cite the Attorney-General's opinion in support of her decision. Whether the Government grasped the full import of the remark or not, the Speaker was very clear on the point.

As Prof Ranga said, the timing of the leak was material. It occurred when the House was possessed of the matter, and the report that Mr Subramaniam had been cleared could have influenced the Speaker's decision on the privilege motion against Mr Subramaniam and the House.

Maybe the Prime Minister believes, like Mr Kamaraj, that silence is a sign of strength. She has not said a word about the Subramaniam affair.

But with Mr Subramaniam's political fortune now are linked the fortunes of many. The revived Syndicate, of Atulya Ghosh, Patil and Sanjiva Reddy would like to see Mr Su-

bramaniam go and in the reshuffle that would follow, would like to strengthen its own position in the Cabinet. In the past, whoever was close to a Prime Minister came under a cloud and went. Mr Krishna Menon and Mr Malaviya in Mr Nehru's days, and Mr Krishnamachari in Mr Shastri's days. This is too much of a coincidence to be brushed aside as mere coincidence.

Whereto?

Where, then, is the Cabinet heading for now, amidst the crisis? The Government is virtually paralysed, with a lot of uncertainty around. Amidst the unseemly jockeying, the real issues in the Subramaniam affair are getting clouded, though the Opposition has been trying to keep them in focus: (in fact, the Opposition has done little else during the current session, which has been full of exposés).

As this despatch is written, the Lok Sabha debate on the PAC reports is yet to begin. The demoralisation in the Congress Party is complete. Until Saturday night, the Government could not enlist a single

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Cabinet Minister to defend Mr Subramaniam in the coming debate. At last, Mr Chagla is reported to have agreed but one cannot say anything about the kind of surprise Mr Patil might spring in the House, determined as he is to shed his last drop of blood to defend the anaemic Government.

Whatever the outcome, the Prime Minister's alienation, and disillusionment would be complete when the debate ends on Monday. It will be the same cacophonous voices once again: with Mr Kamaraj back in India and the cold war between the Prime Minister and the Congress President beginning all over again. When Mr Kamaraj left for Moscow, Mrs Gandhi was away holidaying in the hills and saved herself the obligation to see him off at the airport. When Mr Kamaraj returned to New Delhi and waited full three hours at the airport to catch the plane to Madras, the Prime Minister was too busy to meet him or receive him. Later, when Mr Kamaraj was felicitated at the party meeting, the Prime Minister garlanded him and hailed his triumphant tour abroad.

The Prime Minister, the Congress President and the President of India seem to be thinking on different wave lengths. The President's Independence Day broadcast was an implied indictment of the Government's failure to crack down on the hoarders and the blackmarketeers. It was also more than a mild rebuke for those in Government who say that no talks with China are possible. The accents are wildly different and the approaches divergent. The Congress President commended the example of socialist countries but the Prime Minister speaking next at the Parliamentary Party reception to Mr Kamaraj struck a different note to contradict Mr Kamaraj.

The Prime Minister's policy advisers say she is moving left. Left of what?

August 21, 1966

....When he (Johnson) went to Vietnam in 1961, he compared Diem, the reckless dictator of Saigon, to Churchill, but not, I think, to Milton or Shakespeare.

Kingsley Martin in *New Statesman*

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The Press

Self-Imposed Censorship

COMMENTATOR

IN his usual cynical fashion Mr Krishna Menon had once accused correspondents of deliberately publishing false stories. He was, however, generous enough to suggest that they did not do it maliciously but on professional consideration, for a right kind of wrong story could always provoke a contradiction making two stories out of one. A general complaint of the sufferer against newspapers is that contradictions are seldom given as much prominence as the original stories, especially if the latter conform to the paper's policy and attitude. It is not entirely without reason that at times letters of attorney demanding publication of contradictions stipulate that they should be given as good a display as the stories sought to be repudiated. Even then contradictions seem to have a tendency to appear in obscure corners, the heading seldom giving any idea of what the contradiction is about, though the original story might have been splashed across the front page.

But the opposite does also happen, though rarely, and a contradiction is featured much more prominently than what it contradicts. The allegations made against Mr Atulya Ghosh by some members of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha provide an example. Headline readers of none of the three English dailies of Calcutta could have known that allegation of any kind had been made against Mr Ghosh. Nor did any of the three carry a report of the half-hour debate from its special correspondents, though it is the practice with all the three to publish dispatches from their own men in Delhi on happenings of any moment in Parliament. In many upcountry papers the debate was the main parliamentary event of the day, but the Calcutta papers, *The Statesman* not excepted, carried news agency reports of this part of the proceedings. Curiously, the Delhi edition of *The Statesman* carried a report of the debate by its parliamentary correspondent; but the report was missing in

the Calcutta edition. Perhaps the teleprinter was down.

The news agency report, or at least the half-column of it, that was carried by the paper in Calcutta mentioned Mr Ghosh's name only towards the end and that also without relevance to the allegations made. The single-column front-page story had in its headline Mr Jaisukh Lal Hathil's assurance that nobody involved in spying would be spared. Since it can be no Government's policy to spare persons involved in spying, the headline made little sense. The importance of the statement lay in the context in which it was made. To this the heading did not allude. But on the following day the paper carried a dispatch from its parliamentary correspondent on Mr Ghosh's denial of the allegations. It appeared on an inside page—not one of the unimportant ones—under a heading that declared: "Atulya Ghosh denies charges".

Amrita Bazar Patrika carried a double-column report of the debate on its front page. The report probably circulated by a news agency—the paper does not mention the source—was quite exhaustive. But the heading gave altogether a different impression of what it was about. "Pak Mission breeds spies in India", it ran as if the debate was on the activities of Pakistani Missions in the country. The next day the paper published Mr Ghosh's denial also as a double-column story on the front page. The heading this time was pointed: "No quarters to spies: Ghosh rebuffs critics". It would not be surprising if some of the readers had to consult the previous day's issue to find out who Mr Ghosh's critics were and what they had said.

Crowning Performance

The crowning performance was of *Hindusthan Standard*, which carried a single-column news agency story on an inside page of miscellaneous items ranging from London Stock Exchange quotations to drama review. The report was perhaps the briefest of all

newspapers, and the heading merely announced that the espionage issue had been raised in the Lok Sabha. The report was edited carefully to exclude reference to Mr Ghosh and the editors of the paper were kept quite in the dark till the next day that his name had been mentioned in the debate. The paper had a front-page report the next day under the heading "Ghosh denies allegations". This must be one of the rare examples of a contradiction being carried on the front page, though the allegations were found unworthy of publication.

Feeling perhaps that its duty had not yet been done the paper had an editorial reminding members of Parliament of the "wholesome principle" that they should say nothing in a "involuntary or irresponsible" manner. Wild and sweeping charges must always be avoided to ensure that Parliament does not degenerate into a Billingsgate. The paper deplores that this healthy maxim is often forgotten by legislators in India who, in their eagerness to score debating points, indulge in "irresponsible utterances". It comes to the point when it notes with consternation that even the valued practice not to discuss subjudice matters is being transgressed. The "unscheduled" brief debate in the Lok Sabha over the arrest of certain persons accused of espionage perilously came near the permissible limits, "if they were not actually overstepped". Discussion of subjudice cases in Parliament is "wholly impermissible" in a country which swears by the rule of law. This is a restraint which a "civilised nation" must impose upon itself in order to support the rule of law.

Newspapers outside West Bengal whose allegiance to the rule of law is no less than that of Calcutta papers, however, had a different opinion about the debate. In *The Hindustan Times* it made the lead story with four-column headlines: "Congress high-ups charged with shielding spies. Furor in Lok Sabha over belated arrest of partymen; Government explanation fails to satisfy M.P.s". *The Hindu* carried the report on the front page under a four-column headline—Government promises strong action against persons indulging in espionage work. The Bombay edition of *The Times of India* had the three-column headline "Delay in arrest of spies in West Bengal: pressure alleged"; while its Delhi edition

made second lead of the report with headlines "Atulya Ghosh accused of sheltering spies: Strong protest by Congress M.P.s".

Public Order

There would have been little to write on the Independence Day addresses this year if there had been no recurring reference in them to threats to public order in different parts of the country. Some newspapers have not let this opportunity pass by without a slash at opposition parties allegedly responsible for sponsoring and encouraging lawlessness. The Government's decision to face the situation with firmness has been readily endorsed, though its failure to relieve the distress over shortages and price rises has evoked some comments.

The Hindustan Times has seen a "sinister pattern" in the frequent manifestations of lawlessness in the country from Kerala to Assam. It seems to the paper that large sections of the people have discarded their instinctive respect for law and accepted the bandh and the type of destruction it represents as a way of political life. The opposition parties apparently believe, the paper says, that in an election year public disorder, economic chaos and demonstration of anger against the Government will inexorably push them in the direction of power which has so far eluded them. They have nothing to lose but their frustrations. "There may also be an element of subversive designs present, for it is impossible to believe that the long-drawn agitation in Assam drew its sustenance entirely from public grievance over maldistribution of rice". The paper accuses some Congressmen in Calcutta, Lucknow and Mysore of "zestfully" hurling stones at the police and damaging public property. The Government, however, must not be content with pointing an accusing finger at the Opposition and looking severely at the unruly among its own ranks. Its inactivity and vacillation in the face of widespread distress over shortages and rising prices has enabled even the punier opposition groups to rouse the people into violence. If the Government wishes to check lawlessness, it must not rely on force and its vast emergency powers; it must also remove the basic causes of discontent. Above all, it must shed the reputation that it acts only when an organised body of men twists its arms.

Basing its editorial on the President's message to the nation on Independence Day *Amrita Bazar Patrika* said the "growing lawlessness" was a challenge to the evolution of a good society and a mockery of democracy. Conceding that this lawlessness was due largely to a sense of deprivation and indignity, it says that by succumbing to lawlessness we loosen our moral fibre and betray our precious heritage. The President's simple words contain a grim warning against the gravest threat to India's "new-born democracy". This threat can be kept at a distance if the real masters of the democratic State—the people—are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities. The paper therefore advises the people that they should in the coming general election send to the legislatures representatives who are "cultured, disinterested, and public-spirited" and not those who are lost in petty personal, local, caste and communal squabbles and are likely to succumb to the seduction of power.

The Case Of Sher Afghan

By A DRAMA CRITIC

ONE does not perhaps mind the success of the patient in the play *Sher Afghan* in frustrating the doctor and his psychiatry, for a doctor with that deliberately lofty tone deserves a bit of slogging now and then. Unfortunately, the patient rattles the spectators too, for they do not quite know why *Sher Afghan* or the lunatic or the man playing the lunatic who has been all along scaring the hell out of everybody around him suddenly collapses and looks so helpless. The man had his brains damaged and for ten years he lived under the impression that he was the *Sher Afghan* of history. One feels pity for a man who coops himself up, to roast and squirm, in his miserable hole. After ten years he comes round to his senses but the precious years of his youth are already over and there is nothing worthwhile for him to do; so he continues to live within the four walls of his room, fooling others that he is the same old lunatic. One feels a twinge of fear at this

waste of life through deprivation and despair. But the man alienates one's sympathy the moment he builds up his own rationale and tries to impress people as a second Timon. One refuses to be overwhelmed by a man who is a lunatic and at the same time a caricature of a lunatic.

Sher Afghan could have been a brilliant guessing game; in fact, it should have been. Here is a man who even in his youth was somewhat morbid. He could not mix freely with his friends and he used to believe that he was living in the past when he played in a historical drama. He had, so to say, two levels of reality—historical and real. He could not resolve the two tensions and so developed a streak of morbidity. During the last fifteen years when he was normal after the cure but chose to live the life of Sher Afghan, these two contrary tensions become more accentuated, and he remains high-strung. Even when he decides to continue the life of Sher Afghan, one can well imagine that he is straining at the leash and trying to take himself out of the groove. The opportunity comes in the shape of the marriageable daughter of his friend who engineered his mental derangement. This fateful visit of his old friends could have been decisive. But the memory of the old crime brings about the nemesis, and the criminal is killed. The last frightened look could have been natural for a man who will now be compelled to pose as a lunatic just to avoid the gallows. But all this does not come off in the play. The great damage to the tension of the play is done when Sher Afghan suddenly decides to take his courtiers into his confidence. He explains, expatiates, and talks. No doubt he talks brilliantly, he makes the logic of a sane man sound ridiculous by pitting man against eternity. But at the same time one feels that this man is strong enough to control the tides of human affair. In fact he impresses the spectator so much as a wise guy that all the ambivalence of the morbid young man is cleanly wiped away and the yen for this real life, if there was any in him, seems to vanish and consequently the third act leaves one cold.

There could have been two alternatives. One could have left the auditorium with a haunting memory of a mad man who was mad no more

but chose to be one because he hated man. But his groaning and moaning at the end do not help build that impression. One could have formed the image of a man who morbidly hesitates between imaginary and real life. But Nandikar's Sher Afghan does not look the hesitant type. The confusion lies in the fact that the morbid man is given too huge a task, to live a double life and explain it too. And that's why the whole of the second act sounded too wordy, in spite of the brilliance of Mr Ajitesh Banerji.

Vintage Films

BY A FILM CRITIC

HALF a dozen German films of the silent era covering as many years is not enough for such a fecund period as the early twenties but certainly they offer some rare glimpses of the early workings of the masters as well as of a time of profound spiritual imbalance. The festival of German classic films was inaugurated last week at MaxMuller Bhavan. This week Calcutta Film Society presented them at the Academy of Fine Arts. The silent films are eloquent in more than one sense—music has been added to make the visual experience even more exciting.

It was from *Caligari* to *The Last Laugh*. The period may seem arbitrary but even then it contains the elements that represent the collapse of values and conventions after World War I. In this crisis which upsets normal relations even between the outer and inner existence of individuals most people find themselves withdrawn into a shell that insulates them from external impingement. In such a mental frame, submission to tyrannical authority and preoccupation with the irrational become the habit of the people. It was all the more true in Germany where such an attitude seems to be a permanent and essential strand in the German character.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari is the significant starting point. The writer, Carl Mayer, as is well known, intended it as a story depicting the ultimate triumph of reason over insane authority. Robert Wiene, the director, introduces a framing story but

keeps intact the original one. The minor twist brings about a major transformation—the challenge to authority is made to appear as insane.

Wiene uses painted canvases for his settings with weird patterns dominating the backdrop. The material objects—houses, the fairground tents, the walls and all the rest are drawn in strong, piercing and strident overtones heightening the forebodings. The high chairs, the dark creel-like staircases and the circular perpendicular designs of the asylum show the chaotic state of the mind and the external milieu; these are related to the groupings in the dance cupboard of imagination.

Caligari is the precursor of the genre of films if we choose to describe it as a genre. One aspect of the film—its 'theatricality'—appears to militate against other innovations of a pioneering nature. Its lack of mobility within a fixed surrounding is due largely to the primitive tools.

Fritz Lang in *Destiny* brings Fate to buttress the depredations of the tyrant. In this film three flashback tell the unearthly tales of long gone days and in each case Fate does the trick by putting out the light. There is something murky about the theme but the power of imagery transforms it into a phantasmagoria. The visual illusions suspend disbelief. The grafting of the spectacular is picturesque, though later directors like Paul Verhoeven borrowed from it. Bergmann's *The Seventh Seal* has also some apparent affinities with it.

It is not without significance that Lang was at first entrusted to make *Caligari*. For in some ways *Dr Mabius* appears to be an extension of the *Caligari* theme. The demonic lust for power is the aspiration of both. In *Mabius* the striving for unlimited power nearly makes him a parallel of the state power. Even in the end he eludes the long arm of the law by becoming insane. Kracauer draws attention to the lack of significance of the triumph of Wenk who represents state authority. The larger than life figure of Mabius hovers, looking for chaos.

Expressionism

Lang seems more at home in the crime-infested dark corridors of the mind than in the fairy-tale atmosphere of *Destiny*. His obsession with expressionism is apparent not only in the sets (his architectural background)

JAMSHEDPUR STEELMEN WIN SHRAM VIR NATIONAL AWARDS

In March 1966, the Government of India held the first ceremony to honour the country's new heroes—technicians and industrial workers—with *Shram Vir* National Awards. These awards will be made every year in recognition of suggestions leading to higher production at less cost.

Of the 27 awards this year, no less than five, including two top prizes, went to Tata Steel employees—the largest number won by any industrial unit in the country.

At Jamshedpur, during the last 20 years, employees have put forward over 12,000 suggestions, of which nearly 1,000 have been accepted. These suggestions have helped to increase productivity and make operations safer, and have led to the utilisation of local know-how and materials for self-reliance.

Tata Steel is proud that it pioneered the Suggestion Box Scheme to encourage initiative from the shop floor ... a scheme which is becoming a standard industrial practice in India today.

TATA STEEL



R.C. BHAKAT
won top award of
Rs. 2,000 for suggesting
modifications to the
New Floor Charger
in the Plate Mill.



M.M. MAZUMDAR
won top award of
Rs. 2,000 for suggesting
use of basic bricks in
door arches of
open hearth furnaces.



K.B. DUBEY
won Rs. 500 for
devising a gadget
for protecting
wagon brass-bearings
from pilferage.



BALWANT SINGH
won Rs. 500 for
suggesting modifications
to top coolers of
open hearth furnaces.



AFZAL HUSSAIN
won Rs. 500 for
suggesting modifications
to the side frame of
L.B. wagons.

ground helps), it spreads far beyond.

F. W. Murnau is represented in the session with his *Nosferatu*, the *Dracula* story and *The Last Laugh* which features the redoubtable Emil Jannings. The difference between the two films is immense. What is common is the ingenuity of the director. Both attain a rare perfection. *Dracula* even to this day makes the spectator look over his shoulder. Underneath runs the same story of a struggle between the power of good and evil.

The Last Laugh is the most facile film of the period. For one thing it is without titles and the camera is used with a mobility unsurpassed for many years. The camera performs a major role not as the passive purveyor of the incidents, it succeeds in recording the inner throbbings of the characters. There is a sly irony in Murnau's treatment of the whole episode. The humble doorman's robe invests him with something extraordinary, it creates a hiatus between him and his shabby neighbours. It is this abstract thing that masks off Caligari and Mabuse from the lesser mortals. But from Caligari to the poor doorman is a long way not in the time spanned but in the decline in the image of Authority—it has worn off probably by repeated use of the same symbols and Kracauer notwithstanding, redemption is well nigh impossible.

Alexander Astruc's observation that montage is practically non-existent for Murnau as well as for all German film-makers has more than a semblance of truth in it. To these film-makers, each image is an unstable equilibrium and so long as the movement has not resolved itself no other image can be tolerated. Which explains, according to Astruc, the 'hieratic slowness'—the accomplishment of a promise—the promise of death as in *Nosferatu*.

Book Review

THE WORKING OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Edited by V. V. Ramnadhani
Allied Publishers, Calcutta
Rs. 16

AT a time when criticism of the working of public sector enterprises has been transformed into a vicious campaign against their very

existence, thus suffocating the political atmosphere, this collection of essays and speeches at a seminar provides a breath of fresh air. It is a serious attempt to refashion the working of the public sector so that instead of remaining a bureaucratic exercise as it has become in recent years it could turn into a truly national development for the creation of surpluses for future investments in the economy and for providing goods and services as a basic service.

A dozen eminent economists took part in the seminar and presented their views. Financial structure, investment criteria, management pattern, incentive schemes and monopoly conditions of public enterprises were discussed in detail. The flavour of discussion is well preserved in the volume, which highlights both its limitations and its achievements.

Mr C. Subramaniam, the then Union Minister of Steel, contributes a useful preface. His views seem to represent his pre-pro-American stance. It cannot be said with certainty that he still holds them. Even so, some of them are worth reproducing. He says that "there is a widely held prejudice that public enterprise *per se* cannot be as efficient as the private sector, the reason urged being that the motive of profit is absent in operating a public sector project. I think that I should take this occasion to emphasise that so far as we in India are concerned, our public enterprises are expected to operate with profit motive as one of our primary objectives. There is nothing vicious or immoral about profit in an industrial unit. Indeed, to cover the costs of running an enterprise and to generate resources needed for paying legitimate charges on capital and meeting depreciation requirement is a legitimate social aim. In a sense this is a sure test of efficiency of an enterprise. Of course, we are aware that profits should be got within the basic constraints laid down by society, within the limitations of labour laws, price controls and other regulatory legislation. These constraints apply to private sector no less than to public sector and do not detract in any way from the main objective of aiming at a surplus under given conditions."

The fact of the matter is that constraints have been regularly increased in the last year or two in the public

sector and loosened in the private sector, some of them, fertilizer plants for instance, under the direct imagination of Mr C. Subramaniam himself. The straight-jacket in which the public sector has to operate and the handing over of top management to the bureaucrats are the two main reasons why public enterprises have not generated the anticipated financial surpluses. There are references to these aspects in some papers, though none of them has pointed at these in a sharp manner. This is perhaps the limitation of the academic exercise that a seminar generally is. This seminar was no different despite the fact that one of its ostensible aims was to fuse academic analysis and practical experience into a single pattern of ideas! The hoped for fusion has not been achieved.

Monopolistic?

Prof Jagdish Bhagwati has contributed a very interesting paper entitled, "Monopoly in Public Enterprise". Are public enterprises really monopolistic? Prof Bhagwati provides a useful perspective in which the question of monopoly can be viewed. He writes that "the first major point that occurs to an economist, when discussing the question of monopoly and competition in the Indian economy, is that a very large segment of the economy (and not merely the public sector) works under monopolistic conditions." (pp 91 emphasis in the original).

Under planned growth, which is target-oriented rather than market-oriented, even certain private sector plants would have to work under monopolistic auspices (and they like it that way immensely as it takes that big headache—competition—away) because of the nature of capital issue control, licensing and the permission required to import machinery. The malaise of monopoly is general rather than specific to the public sector. One wishes this point was emphasised more often in public discussions of the public sector.

Another related point about monopoly in public enterprises is provided by Dr Parmanand Prasad while discussing Prof Bhagwati's paper. He argues that certain types of monopoly—for instance regional monopoly in power generation and supply allowed to the DVC—could very well be in the public interest as it helps to supply cheaper power to com-

Others insist that even such monopolies should be consistent with efficiency of operation and be conducive to future growth. Admirable ideas indeed.

Discussing incentives, the seminar comes to the view that premia, bonus for efficiency, increased production, and cost reduction and other cash benefits for better services rendered should become a normal feature of public enterprises in India. Soviet methods and changing forms of management of industrial enterprises, most of which are in the Soviet public sector, are rightly emphasized and cited.

The dimensions of the problem of incentives, to workers as well as to the managerial staff, are discussed. It was, however, found that very few incentives are available to the managerial staff in Indian public undertakings. But very few of the participants point out that most of the senior managerial staff in such undertakings are drawn up from permanent administrative cadres of the Government. If such people are to be rewarded, the discipline in Government departments would suffer. The solution should be that the managerial cadre of public enterprises should be created by upgrading the technical cadre and should not be drawn from the Government administration. Mr I. G. Patel rightly emphasises that, for a proper grasp of work norms, the managerial staff should be able to fuse technical, economic and managerial imperatives into a single model. It is clear that the present IAS and ICS cadres are hardly capable of doing it. But nobody seems to have said so in clear terms in the seminar. Such is the power of bureaucracy even in academic discussions!

All in all, this is a useful collection and should be studied by those who are seriously interested in making the public sector work with efficiency and provide maximum services to the people. We owe a debt of gratitude to Prof V. V. Ramna-dhan for bringing this collection together. He has not allowed the ideas to be dissipated in the political void.

SIKANDAR ALI

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Letters

Vietnam

A group of people in this country condemn Indians for criticising America on the grounds that America's war in Vietnam is against the spread of communism which may affect our national interests. But so far as the humanitarian principles of Communism are concerned, it can be said that the spread of Communism cannot be against India's national interests though it will certainly damage the 'personal interests' of the bourgeoisie.

AKRAM HOSSAIN
Calcutta

It is good that Calcutta is once again reminiscent of 1946 when students while demonstrating their solidarity with Vietnam faced the bullets of the imperialist Government. Demonstrations, meetings and street plays are the conventional methods for expressing solidarity and the formation of different committees and conventions are a natural outcome. I do not disagree with these methods but I totally agree with J. Mohan when he says in his "Calcutta Diary" (August 5) that "something substantial" should be done. Our energies must not be frittered away on the dust of the Maidan, in tearing Yankee flags and in burning the effigy of Johnson. The Committee For Medical Aid recently formed in Calcutta should send a non-official team of medical men to Vietnam. I myself am prepared to go. Of course, this requires Government approval. If Mrs Indira Gandhi genuinely feels for the freedom-fighters of Vietnam, her Government should readily approve of the idea.

SISIR K. MAJUMDAR
Jamnagar, Gujarat

Inside China

We are not a little surprised at your complete silence about the "cultural revolution" that has been initiated by Comrade Mao Tse Tung in China. We find that you, and particularly, your columnist, "A.M.", have always assumed authoritative knowledge of all conceivable aspects of Chinese life. So we have been expecting some enlightenment on this

subject of cultural revolution, but so far we are disappointed.

Indeed, yours is more than an ordinary conscience. That so many professors and intellectuals of China have to commit suicide is no concern of yours. You have not shown even a quiver of anxiety for the mass purge in China where even the primary schoolboys insult, spit on and beat up the teachers and headmasters for their alleged cultural deviations. Professors have been dismissed from their jobs and made to suffer indignities and tortures at the hands of their own pupils even for encouraging students to study Western literature. Incidentally, for this particular crime Marx and Lenin also should be termed "revisionists."

'Now', which advertises itself as a "liberal non-partisan weekly" owes it to its readers an explanation whether it agrees with the Peking Government that ideological differences can be resolved only by physical violence on the defenceless minority or if there is some other civilised way of waging ideological struggle to raise the "cultural standards" of the people.

ASIT SEN, C. S. RAJAMANI,
S. R. GUPTA
Ranchi

Consumers' Resistance

Now-a-days in almost every locality in Calcutta young men are trying to resist the unjustified spiralling of prices. They are giving a tough fight to unscrupulous traders. The State Government should encourage them and the DIR should be forthwith used against the profiteers and black-marketeers. The West Bengal Government should follow its Punjab counterpart in this matter and inspire the confidence of the people. A mere increase of a few rupees in the form of D.A. will not do.

DEBAL KUMAR CHAKRAVARTI
Calcutta

Resistance to high fish prices at the markets may culminate in a riot between retailers and consumers. This is no movement but a drifting away of the middle-class from its allies in a common movement. The retailers are not the enemy of the people. What is true of petty shopowners is no less true of them. The fish market is controlled by the moneyed 'aratdars' who are the enemy of both

the people and the retailers. The retailers are at the mercy of the 'aratdars' who are loyal to the government. The reason why men like Mr Atulya Ghose and Mr P. C. Sen are supporting consumer resistance is that they want to shelter the 'aratdars' from the public wrath by fanning the antagonism between the sellers and the buyers. Consumer resistance can never bring down the price level permanently; the 'aratdars' are in a position to keep their fish in cold storage for a long time, thus creating an artificial dearth of fish.

The workers are not interested in this confusion as fish is a luxury to them. It is mainly the fish-prone, impatient, opportunistic middle class (mostly Bengalis) who have carried things to a point of revolt. What a workers' party can do is to pinpoint the 'aratdars' and by doing so the retailers and the consumers can be united and the 'aratdars' made to face two fronts.

PULAK NARAYAN DHAR
Calcutta

Assam Students

The recent student movement in Assam (August 9) against hoarders and blackmarketeers has attracted the attention of all, which is certainly to be welcome. But the movement failed to achieve its objectives because it lacked sound leadership and because some unsocial elements got into it.

In some towns and elsewhere go-downs of foodgrains and other essential commodities were raided by the police with the help of the students. But the point to remember is that the Government did not move against the blackmarketeers and hoarders before the movement began. The Government, with its armed police force, can suppress any movement. Then why is the same police force not mobilised against the blackmarketeers and hoarders? They are the real enemies threatening the internal security of the country. Why should the students be asked to refrain from any movement?

A. C.
Jorhat

Brown Shirts

We have noted with grave concern the implications of the incident that occurred at New Barrackpore on

August 13 when Congress leaders, who had hinted at their latest plan at the last Maidan rally, were seen in action, supported by their brown shirts who have the innocuous trade name of 'Sevadal'.

It is useless to expect any sanity from the West Bengal Government, for the government itself is run by Congressmen. But we consider it our duty to strike a note of warning for the Left parties and their supporters in general: "Be on your guard; the Al Capone of West Bengal is around!"

SIDDHARTHA SEN-GUPTA, ARUNABHO
DAS-GUPTA, MURAD ABDULLAH,
RAMKUMAR JAIN
Calcutta

Swapna Niye

Miss Sumitra Ghose (*Now*, August 12) seems to be up with arms to rescue Mr Patrea from the rockbottom into which Mr Maitra (*Now*, August 5) had thrown him. Allow me to make some observations about what Miss Ghose calls 'the outstanding film in recent years'.

The advertisement that preceded the release of the film promised that it would carry along the spectators to a dreamland that was far away from the din and bustle of city life. And, oh God, how nicely the poor spectators like us were deported to a dull and shabby den of boredom! Acting was hopeless, dialogue poor, the run of events hysterical, for instance, the convulsion into which the hero broke down on the piano at Madhabi's residence. An excellent treat, indeed. The beauty of the original story by Premendra Mitra lies in the refined and delicate way of presentation; in the film the entire effect is marred by a careless and unimaginative handling of the story by a director who is still a novice in the line.

DEBASIS MUKHERJEE
New Delhi

The review of *Swapna Niye* by Mr Maitra (*Now* August 5) appears to me rather harsh and to some extent pointless. Here is a new director who has at last avoided being influenced by Satyajit Ray. His style of film-telling is different. It is new in our country, though not altogether new—his shot-compositions show the influence of, though distantly, the

French Nouvelle Vague school. The film tells of the apparent discovery of a malaria-stricken, gradually depopulated, far-away Bengal village when on a cursory view, appears as a symbol of mystical placidity—devoid of all contradictions of modern urban life. But behind that facade of placid torpor lie the decadence of the last remnants of decaying feudalism, the contradiction of an aimless husband with his city-bred enlightened wife, the pain of a young widow, the stricken soul of a village girl, the agony of contradictions fundamentally dissimilar from the existing in urban life and, above all, the cry for a better life. Behind the veil of dream it is sheer reality that comes through. Unlike Mr Maitra I think the director is quite sure about the theme and this is his greatest asset.

The flaw of the film lies in a much too slow pace, too many shots, too little delineation of characters.

MIHIR KUMAR MATHUR
Calcutta

Mr Purnendusekhar Patrea, to use the lexicon of cricket, flighted the chinaman up to Mr Probodh Maitra who never knew what to do about it. Jumping across the pitch helplessly, Mr Maitra wanted to take it on the half-volley and send Patrea to, if not over, the ropes. But unfortunately he mistimed the shot and offered a dolly catch to Sumitra Ghosh (Jalpaiguri?).

ABHIEK DASGUPTA
Jadavpur

Zhivago

It is very amusing to note that the late *Now* has become nationalist. At least, your leader 'A Doctor Escapes' (August 5) signifies that. True, it is none of any country's business to tell us what films we shall see and in what shape. But, one wonders, why of all countries only poor Russia will not have the right to protest against a film which is malicious and presents a distorted picture of Communism and the Russian Revolution? Would it not raise a hue and cry if any film is shown in a foreign capital which is anti-Indian in character? After all we all know what "Dr Zhivago" is and why so much publicity was given to it by a particular section of people.

BISWABANDHU BHATTACHARYA
Calcutta

QUALITY CONTROL

✓ = O.K.
X = NOT O.K.

SWITCH	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
MOVEMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PRESSURE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
REFLECTOR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BRIGHTNESS	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FOCUS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
THREAD FITTING	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BARREL & HEAD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BARREL & BASE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
HEAD & HEAD RING	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BARREL & HOLDER	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FINISH OF TORCH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**wish
we could have
this card !**



This is the unseen credential.

All flashlights are tested, item by item, before they leave the factory.

Rigid quality control and test at every stage of the manufacturing process make the flashlights perfect and dependable.

Go ahead and buy Geep, Janta or Alfa flashlights. You may not see this card. All the same, it has built-in quality.



GEEP FLASHLIGHT INDUSTRIES LTD.
28 SOUTH ROAD, ALLAHABAD-1.



STERLING GF-610

Upper Ganges Sugar Mills Ltd.
The Oudh Sugar Mills Ltd.
New India Sugar Mills Ltd.
The New Swadeshi Sugar Mills Ltd.
Bharat Sugar Mills Ltd.
Gobind Sugar Mills Ltd.

●
Manufacturers of :

PURE CRYSTAL CANE SUGAR

●
Managing Agents :

Birla Bombay Private Ltd.,
Industry House, 159, Churchgate Reclamation,
BOMBAY-1.